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Prime Minister's schedule, July 29

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

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July 30, 2009

09:10 Left Haneda Airport on ASDF U-4 multi-purpose support aircraft.

10:34 Arrived at Ube Airport in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Afterward met Gov. Nii.

11:40 Observed area near National Highway 262 in Hofu City.

12:28 Observed Life Care Takasago, a special nursing home, and offered flowers.

14:52 Left Ube Airport on ASDF U-4 multi-purpose support aircraft.

15:17 Arrived at Fukuoka Airport. Afterward met Fukuoka Governor Aso and others.

16:21 Observed collapsed Kyushu Transversal Expressway in Onojo City, and offered flowers.

17:04 Met Fukuoka Governor Aso, Nakagawa Mayor Takesue and others at Nakagawa Town Hall

18:42 Left Fukuoka Airport on U-4 multi-purpose support aircraft.

20:06 Arrived at Haneda Airport.

20:35 Returned to his official residential quarters.

4) F-22 introduction hopeless

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)

July 30, 2009

Nakahiro Iwata, Washington

John Murtha, a Democrat legislator who chairs the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, told Japan's Ambassador to the United States Ichiro Fujisaki in person that it would be difficult to export the F-22, a state-of-the-art fighter jet as a candidate for Japan's follow-on mainstay fighter, U.S. Congress sources revealed on July 28. Japan's introduction of the F-22 is now hopeless.

The Senate recently approved a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010 after eliminating a budget slot of 1.75 billion dollars earmarked for the purchase of seven additional F-22 jets in conformity with President Obama's initiative to reform defense spending.

Meanwhile, the House is expected to approve a defense appropriations bill today, incorporating a budget slot of 369 million dollars for procuring 12 F-22s. However, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a statement on July 28, saying Obama would veto the bill if it is approved as is.

Murtha has so far been positive about budgeting additional F-22 fighter planes. In response to such moves in the U.S. Congress, however, he came up with a modified bill switching from spending on the procurement of F-22s to spending on repair and maintenance services for F-22 jets that are already deployed.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for Murtha reiterated that it would be difficult to export F-22s since the defense appropriations bill includes a clause that prohibits F-22 exports. Murtha is believed to

have conveyed a similar view directly to Fujisaki.

5) Government panel drafts recommendation for exercise of right of collective self-defense; Relaxation of three arms export principles

SANKEI (Top play) (Full)

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July 30, 2009

The draft of a report compiled by the government's Council on Security and Defense Capabilities (chaired by Tokyo Electric Company chairman Tsunehisa Katsumata) in preparation for the revision of the "National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG)," which sets the basic policy for building Japan's defense capability, was revealed on July 29. The draft report recommends changing the constitutional interpretation to allow the exercise of the right of collective self-defense and to authorize the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to engage in operations such as "protecting U.S. ships in the open seas," which are currently banned based on the government's legal interpretation. The report also proposes relaxing the three principles on arms exports, which prohibit the export of weapons to foreign countries, in order to facilitate participation in the international joint development of fighters and other equipment.

The Council will submit its report to Prime Minister Taro Aso on August 4, and this document will serve as the basis of discussion for the NDPG's revision toward the end of this year. However, if the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), reported to be leading in the forthcoming House of Representatives election, takes over the reins of government, confusion will be inevitable in the discussions on NDPG revision.

The manifesto (campaign pledges) published recently by the DPJ makes no mention of the right of collective self-defense, and the party's "Policy Index 2009" says that the exercise of the right of self-defense "will not be bound by the theoretical discussions on individual or collective right of self-defense" and will be based on the "principle of exclusive defense."

For this reason, there is an opinion in the party that "revision of the NDPG by year-end should be deferred because if the debate is started in the party, no consensus will be reached, and this will give rise to turmoil in the steering of the administration." (senior DPJ official) Even if revision takes place, the recommendations of the Council may not be followed.

The draft report recommends changing the constitutional interpretation relating to the following: (1) counterattack when U.S. naval vessels are attacked while sailing alongside SDF vessels; (2) interception of ballistic missiles targeting the U.S.; (3) use of weapons for counterattack in response to an attack on troops of other countries while engaged in UN peacekeeping operations (PKO); and (4) rear support for multinational forces on a common mission. All the above operations can be made possible by a statement from the prime minister or other officials in the Diet that changes the government's interpretation.

The report proposes changing the constitutional interpretation banning the exercise of the right of collective self-defense to allow protection of U.S. vessels and interception of ballistic missiles targeting the U.S. from the standpoint of maintaining and reinforcing the Japan-U.S. alliance. As for (3) and (4), which have so far been prohibited due to the possibility of "use of force," the Council calls for allowing them in order to expand the SDF's participation in PKO.

Furthermore, in light of North Korea's launching of ballistic missiles in April, the Council asks the government to develop early warning satellites for detecting missile launches based on heat

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source. Its report also recommends reinforcing the functions of Japan's Security Council and a review of the "Basic Policy for

National Defense," which has not been revised since it was first formulated in 1957.

With regard to defense capability, the Council calls for a shift from a "multifunctional and flexible" defense capability under the current NDPG to a "multi-tiered and collaborative" defense capability. Specifically, it recommends shifting from emphasis on preparedness for national defense to emphasis on the Japan-U.S. alliance and defense cooperation with the United Nations and multinational collaboration.

Based on the above thinking, the draft report also touches on the need to relax the rules on the use of weapons on PKO missions, in order to be able to cooperate with other countries, and the need to legislate a regular law to authorize the dispatch of the SDF at any time.

6) LDP vows in policy platform to reconsider interpretation of Constitution to enable SDF's interception of missile targeting U.S.

SANKEI (Page 3) (Slightly abridged)  
July 30, 2009

The Liberal Democratic Party unveiled the full text of its yet-to-be officially announced policy platform (manifesto) for the upcoming House of Representatives election yesterday. The party pledges to look into altering the government's interpretation of the Constitution to enable the Self-Defense Force (SDF) to intercept a ballistic missile targeting the U.S. from North Korea or other countries. The manifesto also assumes the possibility of the SDF assisting missile intercepts by the U.S. military.

Prime Minister Taro Aso will officially announce the manifesto tomorrow. Its buzzword is "the ability to take responsibility for protecting Japan," listing 68 items in the areas of security, vitality, and responsibility.

The prime minister instructed the responsible officials to specify the reconsideration of the government's interpretation. The manifesto vows to reconsider the current government's interpretation to allow the SDF to use the right to collective self-defense in certain cases, based on the stance of prioritizing the Japan-U.S. alliance, which is closely linked to national security.

As for employment measures, the manifesto includes a plan to give job training for one million persons over the next three years. The party pledges to prepare a program to enable those aged 70 to still be in active service, including measures to give education and training to people in their 50s to facilitate them to get jobs after the retirement age and to establish a senior expert database.

The manifesto also lays out detailed plans to introduce free education for preschool children. The party vows to phase out fees for children attending kindergartens, day nurseries or the authorized children's centers over three years from fiscal 2010.

Regarding drastic reform of the tax system, including a consumption tax hike, the party promises to work out necessary legal measures by fiscal 2011 and to carry them out immediately after the economy turns around.

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The manifesto further proposes introducing the social security numbering and card system in fiscal 2011 and also resolving the pension record-keeping fiasco by the end of next year. In addition, it pledges to enact a basic law on the doshusei system, in which prefectures are reorganized into larger administrative blocs, at an early date and introduce the system by 2017. Further, the LDP proposes reducing the number of House of Representatives members by more than 10 PERCENT in the general election that eventually follows the next one. Although its draft included measures to establish a system to protect human rights, such as granting local suffrage to foreign residents and legislation to protect human rights, but the final version excludes these measures, giving consideration to cautious views in the party.

7) DPJ leader Hatoyama: MSDF's refueling mission to be terminated; DPJ comes up with new policy, sandwiched between SDP and U.S.

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
July 30, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama announced yesterday a policy of not extending the New Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which will expire next January and withdrawing a Maritime Self-Defense unit, which has been carrying out its refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. The DPJ is torn between the demands of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) -- with which the DPJ is expected to form a coalition if it assumes the reins of government in the upcoming House of Representatives election -- which wants the immediate withdrawal of the MSDF personnel, and the United States, which expects Japan to continue its refueling mission. As result, the DPJ has come up with this new policy.

When the DPJ was under President Ichiro Ozawa, it asserted that the refueling mission should be terminated immediately, citing the operation as "unconstitutional." In consideration of relations between Tokyo and Washington, Hatoyama, however, had shifted this policy to a pragmatic policy line of continuing the mission even after his party takes the political helm.

The DPJ had avoided referring to its response after the expiration of the law, thinking that it would not be wise to reveal its decision before holding consultations with the United States.

It was the first time for Hatoyama to reveal the party's decision to withdraw the MSDF troops from the Indian Ocean. He has conveyed this to SDP Chairperson Mizuho Fukushima. The DPJ made this decision with an eye on consultations on a coalition government with the SDP after the general election.

However, the DPJ's policy of terminating the MSDF's refueling mission might create a rift between Tokyo and Washington. In an attempt to persuade the United States, the DPJ intends to discuss alternative measures that Japan will provide Afghanistan.

It seems however that DPJ Deputy President Naoto Kan did not know about Hatoyama's statement. Referring at a press conference yesterday to the refueling mission, he said: "We will discuss the issue by next January and reach a conclusion." This exposed that a consensus had not yet been reached even among DPJ executives.

The DPJ's manifesto (campaign pledges for the next general

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election), revealed on July 27, did not stipulate the MSDF's refueling mission. The DPJ appears to have been motivated by a desire to have a freehand so that it would be able to flexibly respond to the calls of the SDP and the United States.

But the DPJ's policy switch instead has given the impression that the party is disorganized.

8) Hatoyama to "discuss alternative plan" for Indian Ocean mission

SANKEI (Page 2) (Abridged)  
July 30, 2009

If the Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) takes the reins of government in the forthcoming general election for the House of Representatives, Japan will discontinue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's ongoing refueling activities in the Indian Ocean and recall the MSDF next January when the renewed antiterror special measures law is due to expire, DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama told reporters yesterday on a campaign stop at the town of Kikuyo in Kumamoto Prefecture. In addition, Hatoyama also clarified that the DPJ would formulate an alternative plan prior to the law's expiration after consulting with the United States.

"Our position is not to extend" the new antiterror special measures law beyond its expiration next January, Hatoyama said, adding:

"During that time, in the process of establishing a relationship of mutual trust with U.S. President Obama, we will find a solid solution."

The DPJ has stressed that Japan will not withdraw the MSDF at once even after taking the reins of government. This was out of consideration for the United States and countries whose naval vessels have been refueled by the MSDF. However, the DPJ had continued to oppose extending the special measures law, under which the MSDF has been refueling U.S. and other foreign naval vessels in the Indian Ocean. The DPJ was therefore criticized for deviating from previous statements. This seems to be why Hatoyama chose to withdraw the MSDF upon the law's expiration as a compromise plan between the option of continuing the refueling mission and the option of withdrawing the MSDF at once.

The DPJ, however, used to criticize the MSDF's Indian Ocean dispatch per se as "unconstitutional," in the words of former DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa. If the DPJ sees it as unconstitutional, its cabinet should withdraw the MSDF as soon as possible after the general election. It is unclear as to why the DPJ plans to continue the refueling mission for the time being.

9) Interview with SDP President Mizuho Fukushima:

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
July 30, 2009

-- What pledges are you going to emphasize in the election campaign?

With the "reconstruction of livelihoods" as our slogan, we will stress the need to improve the job market and people's livelihoods, and reconstruct local communities. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) has pointed out that the direction of the Koizumi administration's structural reform was wrong. The government of the Liberal

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Democratic Party (LDP) and the New Komeito undermined the quality of people's lives. What the people are seeking is a social democratic society, in which welfare services are valued and people can live in harmony. Many people have asked me with tears in their eyes to change politics without fail. It is unprecedented that so many people have made such a plea. It is now time for the SDP to play a key role.

-- A coalition government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) is likely to be established. What approach are you going to take?

We will clearly advocate social democracy. The DPJ said before that the Koizumi structural reform is too lenient. A real policy switch will be realized for the first time when the SDP achieves a victory. Although the DPJ had been reluctant to revise the Worker Dispatch Law, as a result of our persuasion, the SDP, the DPJ and the People's New Party (PNP) submitted a bill amending the law. The SDP is the source of policy change and the basis of solidarity in the Diet. I want people to think about whether the DPJ will be able to reconstruct people's lives if the party wins an overwhelming victory. I want to underscore that everything should be entrusted to the SDP because the LDP is hopeless and the DPJ is dangerous. We also want to emphasize: "Those who want to protect Article 9 of the Constitution should support the SDP."

-- Are you going to join a coalition government with the DPJ?

First, we must win the election. Coalition talks will come after the election. Under the government of the LDP, the SDP and the New Party Sakigake, there were such positive results as no progress on constitutional reform and on the issue of dispatch of the Self Defense Force overseas, but it was no good to mix up our party's policies and the coalition's. If we form a coalition, we will have to clarify such points as the purpose of our joining the coalition; unacceptable policies; policies that must be translated into action without fail.

-- What are your conditions to start negotiations on a coalition?

Although I cannot say definitely, we absolutely oppose the dispatch of Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops overseas. It is important to maintain the three nonnuclear principles. (The SDP's and the DPJ's) opposition to the bill amending the new antiterrorism special measures law also has great significance.

-- What policy differences will you stress between your party and the Japanese Communist Party (JCP)?

The SDP is capable of playing a key role in a specific and realistic way in the new political scene. We are in a very good position to hold a casting vote. Since the JCP will not join a coalition, its position is quite different from ours.

-- How many seats are you aiming to win?

We aim to get more than 10 seats. We are cooperating with the DPJ and the PNP for the coming election more closely than in the previous election campaign. We will make utmost efforts to be victorious in single-seat constituencies. In 11 proportional representation blocs across the nation, we would like to win one seat, at least.

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10) DPJ wavering in its new pragmatic policy line as President Hatoyama decides not to extend refueling operations

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
July 30, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama on July 29 revealed his policy intention of not extending the refueling operations being carried out by the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) in the Indian Ocean. He has apparently given consideration to the Social Democratic Party (SDP), with which the DPJ will form a coalition after assuming the reins of government. The party's manifesto (campaign pledges), released recently, has incurred criticism both from the ruling and opposition parties because it left room for an extension of the MSDF's refueling operations by refraining from touching on the issue. One can say that the DPJ, which is being rocked by criticism of its manifesto, has revealed its weakness by going on the defense.

SDP President Mizuho Fukushima called Hatoyama on his cell phone. Hatoyama, who was then in Kyushu, told her, "I have no intention of extending (the MSDF) refueling operations, which are to end in January next year)."

The DPJ along with the SDP have been taking a position of opposing the refueling operations. However, Hatoyama on the 17th told reporters: "Diplomatic continuity is necessary. It is reckless to stop the operations all at once." Concerning the possibility of extending the operations after the expiration, Secretary General Katsuya Okada at a press conference on the 24th also told reporters, "There is a possibility of approving the extension, after making necessary revisions."

The statements of the two DPJ leaders were taken as implying such an extension to the continuation of the operation was possible for the time being. A senior DPJ official explained: "The DPJ has opposed extending the operations. However, we have never called for an immediate pullout."

However, the SDP is dismayed at the DPJ's pragmatic approach. Fukushima repeatedly said, "We cannot overlook the DPJ's fuzziness." Gaps and discord between the DPJ and other opposition parties are the most open to attacks by the ruling parties, which are suffering from setbacks.

11) DPJ will not extend refueling mission, attentive to SDP to preserve coalition

MAINICHI (Page 4) (Full)  
July 30, 2009



Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama has clarified that the DPJ (if elected ruling party) would not extend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's current refueling activities in the Indian Ocean after next January's expiry of the new antiterror special measures law that allows the MSDF to conduct its mission. What lies behind this is consideration for the Social Democratic Party (SDP), with which the DPJ is expecting to form a coalition after the upcoming general election for the House of Representatives. However, the DPJ has yet to finalize its course of action to withdraw the MSDF after the law ends. This issue will remain a source for controversy.

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"DPJ President Hatoyama clearly said, 'We will not extend the antiterror special measures law.'" With this, SDP President Mizuho Fukushima unveiled an episode about a telephone conversation she had with Hatoyama on the morning of July 29.

When the Diet was open in the fall of 2007, the DPJ and the SDP voted against a government-introduced bill extending the MSDF's refueling mission and suspended the MSDF's refueling mission for a while. This time, however, the DPJ chose a down-to-earth course of action to continue it for the time being. Fukushima had expressed concern. Even if the DPJ gains a single-party majority of the seats in the House of Representatives after the next general election, the DPJ alone cannot maintain a majority in the House of Councillors without the SDP's cooperation. Hatoyama is therefore believed to have tried to quiet it down.

One DPJ member, who is familiar with relations with the United States, took this view: "For the United States, this issue is less important than the issue of revising the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement and thinking twice about the relocation site of the U.S. military's Futenma airfield." However, once Japan raises the issue of the MSDF's pullout, the United States will likely call on Japan to make additional contributions in Afghanistan.

12) U.S.-China Strategic Dialogue: G-2 system now in motion

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
July 30, 2009

Masaya Oikawa, Washington; Joji Matsuura Beijing

The first round of the cabinet-level U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue ended on July 28. The Dialogue, which covered a wide range of topics from climate change to the North Korean nuclear issue, demonstrated new phase for U.S.-China relations for the 21st century, while offering a glimpse into a subtle change in the political dynamics between the two countries, as seen in the United States' occasional demonstration of its "consideration" for a "bullish" China. The Dialogue is an ambitious effort for the United States and China to proactively address issues that are usually handled by the G-8 or the G-20. How far the G-2 arrangement, composed of the United States and China, can achieve progress remains to be seen.

Takashi Sudo

The Japanese government is alarmed, suspecting that a closer U.S.-China relationship might end up creating a chance for the two countries alone to handle a variety of issues in Asia. Although there is a move among Japan, the United States and China to search for a framework to form a trilateral dialogue, it is a double-edged sword that might end up forcing Japan to blindly follow in the footsteps of the United States and China. As such, Japan remains unable to determine how to deal with it.

The Japanese government basically thinks the U.S.-China relationship is still at the stage of searching for each other's intention, with a senior Foreign Ministry official saying, "The United States and China are essentially different." Tokyo wants to maintain the two-vs.-one paradigm of facing up to China based on the Japan-U.S. alliance.

At the same time, coordination is underway to hold director general-level talks as early as this summer under the initiative of China. Japan, which wants to avoid matters being decided under the lead of the U.S. and China, is not necessarily eager for trilateral talks either. Tokyo is particularly on alert about Japan and the United States - two allies - sitting at the same table with China to discuss security affairs.

If talks are actually held under a Japan-U.S.-China framework on the back of the deepening U.S.-China relationship, America's failure to clearly announce its support for Japan might give a chance for China to score diplomatic points by taking advantage of it. "Even an objective draw between Japan and China, Japan would lose diplomatic points," a senior Foreign Ministry official said. Japan wants to avoid the two-vs.-one paradigm becoming an equilateral triangle.

At the same time, an outlook that China's national strength, including its economic power, will surpass that of Japan in the long run is on its way to reality. The senior Foreign Ministry official took this view, "We will have to continue making efforts to make China understand that closer ties with Japan will benefit it."

13) WUC President Kadeer to seek right to national self-determination through dialogue with China

YOMIURI (Page 7) (Excerpts)  
July 30, 2009

Seita Higa

Visiting President Rebiya Kadeer of the World Uighur Congress (WUC), an organization of Uighurs residing overseas, has asked Japan and the United Nations to send investigative teams. The reason is because she has strong distrust in the Han-led post-riot response, as seen in the tight control on information in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. The president said, "At present, we have autonomy in form only." She revealed a plan to strongly seek the right to national self-determination through a dialogue with the Chinese government.

"The death toll announced by China is a lie. We do not believe it at all." The president also said about the autonomous region's actual situation after the riots: "It is certain that over 10,000 Uighurs have been detained by authorities. Our people are in great danger." She played up the need for the international community to become swiftly involved in the Uighur issue.

Kadeer also condemned the suppression of riots by Chinese authorities, saying, "There is information that they had stopped electricity during the dark hours and opened fire indiscriminately," adding, "I want the international community to pursue China's responsibility."

At the same time, expressing concern about the intensifying confrontation between Han Chinese and the Uighurs, she asked for a dialogue with the Chinese government, saying, "Dialogue is the only way to dissolve the matter peacefully."

14) Chinese government expresses "strong dissatisfaction" with WUC president's visit to Japan

YOMIURI (Page 7) (Abridged)

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July 30, 2009

Satoshi Saeki, Beijing

Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, calling in Japanese Ambassador to China Yuji Miyamoto, lodged a protest with Japan on July 29 about the fact that Tokyo allowed World Uighur Congress (WUC) President Rebiya Kadeer to visit Japan, while expressing

China's "strong dissatisfaction" with the matter. Wu urged Japan to take an effective step immediately to stop Kadeer's anti-China activities in Japan. China is keeping a watchful eye on Kadeer's activities, regarding them as a move reflecting active movements of Uighur separatists in the international community.

15) JAPEX aims to have access to Iraqi oil fields

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Full)  
July 30, 2009

Japan Petroleum Exploration Co., Ltd. (JAPEX), a leading oil and natural gas development company, has entered talks with the Iraqi government with the aim of securing a right to develop major oil fields in that nation. Iraq, which has the world's third largest crude oil reserves, has decided to fully introduce foreign capital for production expansion for the first time in about 40 years. Other Japanese companies, such as Nippon Oil Corporation, are also pursuing talks with Iraq. Japanese companies' moves to aim to advance into Iraq are accelerating.

JAPEX will aim to develop the East Baghdad oil field located in a suburb of Baghdad. Since it has cooperated with the Iraqi government in terms of assessing oil fields and providing training to engineers since 2005, the company has judged that it would be relatively easy to commercialize the project. It is expected that the oil field will produce about 10 percent of Japan's daily domestic demand - 400,000 barrels a day. JAPEX has proposed developing a mining area on the southern side of the oil field.

JAPEX has proposed development costs and production goals in specific terms. The company plans to proceed with talks to discuss development terms with the Iraqi government.

A consortium consisting of JAPEX, New Oil Corporation and JGC Corporation has already proposed the development of the Nasiriyah oil field in southern Iraq. It is expected that if Japanese companies win these projects, Japan could secure new profit sources. It would also contribute to Japan's energy security.

16) Justice Ministry's subcommittee in final report: Lowering adult age to 18 appropriate

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Excerpts)  
July 30, 2009

The Civil Law Adult Age Subcommittee of the Legislative Council of the Justice Ministry, an advisory panel to the justice minister, yesterday compiled a final recommendation report in which the subcommittee proposes lowering the legal age of adulthood to 18 from the current 20, on condition that the voting age is also lowered to 18. The report also points out that such legal measures as one to protect consumer will be necessary. It does not propose a time frame for revising the Civil Code, saying the decision should be entrusted

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to the Diet.

The report proposes that the legal age for marriage should be set at 18 both men and women, while the legal age for adopting a child should be kept the present 20. Currently, the legal age for marriage in Japan is 18 for men and 16 for women.

The subcommittee had discussed a review of the legal age of adulthood, following the national referendum law which stipulates that the voting age is set at 18. The law calls for lowering the adult age and the voting age by May 2010 when it will take effect. The Legislative Council plans to submit the report soon to Justice Minister Eisuke Mori.

17) Government advisory panel urges laws for reviving Ainu culture

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
July 30, 2009

The government panel that studies Ainu polices, chaired by Koji

Sato, professor emeritus at Kyoto University, yesterday submitted its report to Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura. The report urges the government to take concrete steps to improve the lives of indigenous Ainu people and promote their culture through new legislation.

The report says that Ainu people are the original inhabitants of Hokkaido. It stipulates that the nation has a responsibility to give consideration to the restoration of Ainu culture, while indicating the fact that the government's modern culture policy seriously undermines Ainu culture.

The government intends to set up a panel in the Cabinet Secretariat to promote Ainu policies.

ZUMWALT